



# CURRICULUM RATIONALE

December 2020



## ELSS YEAR 7-8 SUBJECT ENTRY CURRICULUM

### Knowledge for all: where do years 7 and 8 fit in to your child's overall academic programme?

The ELSS curriculum is intellectually ambitious and driven by subject knowledge specialism in accordance with the school's ethos and vision for all pupils. The curriculum is organisationally coherent and taught with a focus on the following elements to all pupils as an entitlement irrespective of background or starting point:

Year	Content	Aim
Year 7	Introduction to the subject for all including the grammar of the subject and baseline testing	To build a love of the subject and ensure a secure a grounding in the subject based on the underlying principles.
Year 8	Expansion of subject knowledge in all subjects	To build a love of the subject and an awareness of the development of the subject
Year 9	GCSE Year 1 – breadth	Sustaining breadth in subject alongside introduction to GCSE content including new subjects
Year 10	GCSE Year 2	In depth GCSE content
Year 11	GCSE Year 3	Course completion, GCSE detailed focus and revision
12/13	A-Level	University level preparation and teaching

## YEARS 7-8 ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

At East London Science School, we strongly believe, in line with our school slogan, that we 'stand on the shoulders of giants'. In short, we can all learn from the great teachers of the past and our amazing intellectual heritage as we aspire to make our own mark on the world in the future. In particular, we understand that pupils aiming to get to top universities in the future need inspiring teaching and to develop a love of subject that is built on the foundations provided by those great teachers.

This is the role of our Year 7 and 8 curriculum: to introduce your child to the fantastic subjects that help explain our world and to develop a love of learning that will sustain them in the years ahead so that they too can make their own mark on the world.

We also understand that our pupils starting in Year 7 may not know much about the subjects we study from their primary school experience. For that reason, we have worked a lot at our

curriculum offer to ensure that all subjects – not only English and Mathematics – offer a baseline introduction to the subject at the start of Year 7. This introduces the subjects we study and helps pupils understand the ‘grammar’ of each subject and why it is so important for their understanding of the world. This really helps us understand where your child is starting at and also whether they are already able to push ahead in the subject.

As a science school, you would rightly expect those subjects to include the leading scientific subjects of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. One of our other principles as a school is that all pupils deserve a good education in science. But what is truly distinctive about our curriculum is that we offer those three sciences as separate subjects to ALL pupils from Years 7 until Year 11.

We also offer a range of other sciences such as Computer Science (also in Year 7) Electronics and Astronomy from Year 9. All in all, we are very proud of this range of scientific subjects.

It is vital, for a science school, that we build scientific knowledge on firm principles of mathematics and English. For this reason, we run more lessons in those subjects in order to ensure that all our pupils are able to develop the application and understanding and love of number and word that is vital to their progress.

As well as our unapologetic love of the sciences, we believe in a broad and balanced curriculum offer, including classics, the humanities, languages, arts, music and a world class enrichment and sports offer.

We are one of the few London schools to offer languages from year 7 to year 11 and have put a lot of work into developing our French and German subject specialism. We also teach Latin from Year 7 which is an excellent way to discover the roots of some of our major European languages – and also very good at showing our pupils the origins of modern scientific nomenclature.

Our humanities offer in Years 7 to 8 is centred on Geography and History with a strong focus in each of those subjects on the foundational aspects of world history, British and world chronology and kings and queens (History) and place names, capital cities, rivers and geology (Geography).

### **ENRICHMENT AND SPORTS**

In Enrichment we use our experienced staff to show that London really is our classroom, with regular weekly trips into London for Years 7 and 8. We visit everything from museums and galleries to scientific laboratories and key landscapes. There is no limit to what London can offer! This helps hugely to build up our pupil knowledge of one of the greatest cities in the world. Moving beyond London, it is just worth mentioning that one of the highlights of the year for all our pupils is our Summer Term Enrichment Fortnight when all pupils are off timetable for two

weeks to explore a range of fantastic and inspiring venues and places from around the country – and abroad. In recent years this has included trips to Oxford and Cambridge University, fossil collecting on the Kent coast, National Space Museum, the Battle of Hastings site, Premier League football, whole school lectures on space exploration and international trips to Paris and Cern in Geneva. It is truly an amazing part of our curriculum and is completely unique at secondary school level!

In sports, we are fortunate to have access to top coaches and venues so that we are able to offer everything from Rugby League at East London Rugby Club to Rowing at Royal Docks. We also offer a range of other sports such as swimming, football, cricket and handball. With a strong ethos of competition, we aspire for your child to be challenged to participate and aim for victory – as well as learn to lose gracefully in the case of defeat.

The school is also proud to offer the Duke of Edinburgh programme to our pupils from Year 9 onwards.

In the current circumstances our Enrichment programme is on hold and the school is offering a rich and diverse programme of clubs in-school:

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
Geology Rocks Franklin Ms Harris	Great Books Johnson Mr Taylor	Travel and Tourism Franklin Ms Harris	Camp Craft Clock Mill Green Ms Harris	Culture Club Franklin Ms Harris
Yr7 choir Main Hall Mr McPherson	Homework Faraday Ms Choudry	Football Club Clock Mill Green Mr Fitzpatrick	Chess club Einstein Mr Fitzpatrick	Drawing club Darwin Mr Alves
Card Game Club Faraday Ms Choudry	Drawing Club Darwin Mr Alves	Chess Club Wallace Mr Kasisari	Drawing club Darwin Mr Alves	KS3 Ukulele Club Music Room Mr McPherson
Drama club Wittingham Mr Iwumene	Yr 7 keyboard Music Room Mr McPherson	Homework Faraday Mr Owusu	Multi sports Clock Mill Green Sports TEAM	Drama Club Wittingham Mr Iwumene
Chess club Library Ms Sullivan	Multi sports Clock Mill Green Sports TEAM	Yr 8 Keyboard Music Room Mr McPherson	Homework Faraday Ms Choudry	Multi sports Clock Mill Green Sports TEAM

Multi sports Clock Mill Green Sports TEAM	Chess club Wallace Mr Kasisari	Poetry Club Whittingham Ms Shefford	Drama Club Wittingham Mr Iwumene	Homework Library Ms Sullivan
Homework Tesla Ms Doherty	Life Skills Franklin Ms Harris	Yr 7 Craft Club Library Ms Sullivan	Yr 8 craft Club Library Ms Sullivan	Astronomy Club Johnson Mr Annal
Drama club Wittingham Mr Iwumene	Astronomy Club Johnson Mr Annal	Multi sports Clock Mill Green Sports TEAM	Amazon Lovelace Mr Perkins	Drawing Club Darwin Mr Alves

## ETHICS

This remarkable subject aims to encompass a range of social, moral, ethical, spiritual and religious issues through teaching your child to think for themselves and argue on their own two feet. We do this by engaging with contemporary moral ideas and perspectives and then helping our pupils to speak in front of others and develop their own arguments for and against other ideas. Please note they may be asked to argue for ideas that they do not agree with!

We take this forward through the years by developing public speaking and debating opportunities that build on the skills learned in Years 7 and 8 and teach freedom through an ethic of shared tolerance for opposing ideas – a vital attribute in a complex city such as London.

Some of our older pupils gained their intellectual spurs in Ethics when they started the school and we are very proud of watching them develop the ability to speak and listen to exceptional standards.

At the time of publication, our Sports and Enrichment offers have been affected by the Covid pandemic. In their place, we offer a huge range of clubs and opportunities to our Year 7 and 8 pupils to develop their love of learning.

## HOMEWORK AND ONLINE LEARNING

The school has a strong ethic of hard work as the foundation of academic achievement. We offer a range of opportunities in school to help pupils with their homework including structured prep sessions where pupils are supervised to complete some of their work in school. The aim is to get pupils to understand how to work independently in a university style environment.

The school has a lot of testing opportunities for pupils to check their academic achievement

and for teachers and parents to assess how much has been learned and needs to be improved. The school has also developed its online teaching and testing capability using Zoom and Teams (originally developed as a response to the Covid situation) so that both lessons and tests can be offered to all pupils in this format. We are very confident that the level of thinking and preparation created by this format can maintain and extend the quality of assessment and examination we offer.

Regular homework is also set in Years 7 and 8 but this really picks up in Year 9 – and the focus in Years 7 and 8 is to test the knowledge learned in each subject across the board.

The way we test our pupils has two great benefits: pupils get a chance to show us their factual knowledge and recall and they are proud of their achievement – and they also learn not to be afraid of tests in the future!

## **ELSS YEAR 9-11 CURRICULUM**

Breadth, depth and detail. This summarises our approach from Year 9 onwards. Although GCSE courses are grouped to start from Year 9, there is a continuing focus on the logic of the subject before greater depth is developed in Year 10 and greater exam detail in Year 11.

The school is proud to offer the following subjects at GCSE level from Year 9 with a very distinct expectation of all pupils entering the prestigious and academically demanding EBacc qualification.

- English Literature and Language (all years)
- Mathematics (all years)
- Further Mathematics (from Year 10)
- Electronics (from Year 9 if chosen)
- Astronomy (from Year 9 if chosen)
- Physics (all years)
- Chemistry (all years)
- Biology (all years)
- Computer Science (all years then if chosen in Year 9)
- History (all years then if chosen in Year 9)
- Geography (all years then if chosen in Year 9)
- Economics (from Year 9 if chosen)
- Ethics (non-examined) (all years)
- Philosophy (taught as part of the Extended Project Level 2 Qualification) (from Year 9 if chosen)

- Ancient Greek (from Year 9 if chosen)
- Latin (all years then if chosen in Year 9)
- French (all years then if chosen in Year 9)
- German (all years then if chosen in Year 9)
- Mandarin (from Year 9 if chosen)
- Music (all years then if chosen in Year 9)
- Art (all years then if chosen in Year 9)
- Photography (all years then if chosen in Year 9)
- Sport (offered to all pupils with some pupils selecting as a GCSE in Year 9)

At EBacc all pupils complete three separate sciences, a humanities subject and a modern or ancient foreign language. The school enters an unusually high proportion of our pupils for the EBacc compared to other comparable schools.

In Year 9 the curriculum maintains the focus on breadth of subject knowledge. GCSE studies and groups begin in this year but the GCSE content does not dominate the course until Year 10. There is a clear expectation that the GCSE specification is NOT the focus in Year 9: the integrity of the subject, introduced at Years 7 and 8, continues to lead the curriculum.

Typically, GCSE level requires that our pupils are more able to apply and develop ideas that they may have learned in the earlier years, and also be able to explain coherently some of the points they have only described when younger. In short, they are required to really take the subject seriously and begin to own it for themselves.

This is a time in the life of the curriculum and school which teachers love, because we can sense the growing sense of intellectual confidence as pupils really begin to take ideas seriously. Parents can often sense a change in their children at this point, as what we previously taught becomes something the pupils seek out more readily – one can see their horizons widen.

Towards the end of Year 9 there is a move to greater depth of GCSE content which is concluded by the shortly after the start of year 11. This sets pupils up for their detailed exam GCSE specification preparation and revision in the remainder of year 11.

In Year 10 we aim to complete the bulk of the GCSE courses and then Year 11 is used to complete courses, revise and practice examinations so that pupils are as best prepared as possible for the demands of their final examinations. This can, of course, be a demanding time for our pupils and we take a step by step approach towards ensuring they are ready for examinations as well as are given a chance to breathe and experience other things. A great highlight of the Year 10 year, for example, is the final Enrichment Fortnight experience for our pupils which becomes something of

a rite of passage – but also a settling experience as pupils and teachers get ready to drive for their final examinations in Year 11.

Although the GCSE is the qualification, it is worth restating that the logic of the subject over and above particular qualifications remains the driving educational insight of the three year period as we know that passing the GCSE must not be done at the expense of being ready to rise to the next stage of their studies at A-level. So preparatory work for A-level begins shortly after exams conclude in year 11 and in some cases starts before.

A good example of the development of the curriculum model in Years 9-11 is Mathematics, where we aim to teach as many pupils as possible to Further Maths standards for as long as possible in order to test out our pupils knowledge, ambition and desire to know.

However, we are also aware that some pupils may need some help to get the highest grades and access the whole curriculum may be adapted to suit that need. We insist that this is done as late as possible so that all our pupils get the access to the highest level of subject knowledge and exam preparation.

Other factors such as Sports and Enrichment are still offered in Year 11 but a lot of the focus is on how to apply for 6th forms and what subjects to think about at A-level. To this end, the Enrichment offer in year 11 includes structured advice and guidance as well as a number of opportunities to gain insights into A-level expectations and study skills for future studies. Another highlight is the pupils' final speech in Ethics in Year 11, which we often include as part of their English Speaking and Listening qualification, such has been the standard in recent years.

As with Years 7 and 8, the school increases the testing opportunities in Years 9-11 and increasingly is able to offer online versions of assessment in all formats.

## **ELSS YEAR 12-13 CURRICULUM**

The 6th Form curriculum is the intellectual leader of the school. As our school has grown the subject expectations and intellectual rigour of our subjects has grown with it. We are extremely proud of this achievement and want to ensure it is enshrined in our school's ethos. For that reason we expect ALL our 6th form pupils to take Mathematics and a Science subject as one of their A-level choices. However, we also offer a range of other subjects as shown below:

- Maths (compulsory for all pupils)
- English Literature
- Biology
- Chemistry

- Physics
- History
- Computer Science
- Latin
- Philosophy
- GCSE retakes in Further Maths, Maths and English

We also expect our students to begin to take the next steps in their future studies seriously, and demand a rigorous engagement with the process of university application, from statement writing to referencing and setting up their profiles for future studies through UCAS. We also expect students to research universities properly and have a view of the process that studying in itself is a good and broadens the mind. For that reason we offer a rigorous residential 6th Form induction process for all our new 6th Form students in Year 12 at Oxford or Cambridge University. To match this ambition, we also ensure our staff attend a yearly residential study weekend at Oxford or Cambridge in order to ensure that the study of the subject is experienced in a university setting. This sharing of educational development for staff and students is a really vital part of the way the school sees the development of the 6th Form – and we know both staff and students understand that this contributes to the scholarly behaviour that has already seen our students begin to enter and succeed at top universities.

We are also aware of the university demand for well-rounded students over and above their subject specialism. Fortunately, this accords with our own understanding of education so we put a lot of effort into developing the wider profile and maturity of our students through an enrichment offer of debating, community service, sport and social engagement.

Our school's principles state that we will judge our pupils' success by the impact they have on the world and the 6th Form is the place where the educational shaping of the curriculum for the last seven years comes together. It is a proud moment when the curriculum is completed and when the process of teaching a subject thoroughly is done it is of course the platform for a lifelong relationship between teachers and students when they return from their universities to visit the school. We hope at this point that the curriculum will have done its job in taking our students' minds seriously and introducing them to their intellectual heritage and love of learning that constitutes the Western tradition and knowing the best that has been thought and said.